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## NOTES

### WAGES AND HOURS OF LABOR IN 1919<sup>1</sup>

This survey was conducted during the period—September, 1918—June, 1919, in 28 industries, located in 43 states, and covered plants employing 404,758 wage-earners. Approximately 95 per cent of the schedules were for periods from December, 1918, to May, 1919, inclusive. The survey in the main, therefore, covers the post-armistice period. The material collected concerning the number of hours actually worked and the earnings per hour is classified in respect to (a) industry, (b) sex, (c) state.

The following tables, perhaps, summarize the general results more concisely than those of the Bureau.

TABLE I  
HOURS WORKED PER WEEK AND EARNINGS PER HOUR OF MALE EMPLOYEES

HOURS WORKED PER WEEK*				EARNINGS PER HOUR WORKED			
Number of Hours per Week	Number of Workers	Per-centage	Cumulative Per-centage	Earnings per Hour in Cents	Number of Workers	Per-centage	Cumulative Per-centage
Under 24.....	32,423	10	10	Under 20.....	1,715	1	1
24-30.....	18,333	6	16	20-30.....	18,364	6	7
30-36.....	20,483	6	22	30-40.....	51,557	16	23
36-42.....	28,180	9	31	40-50.....	80,089	25	48
42-48.....	41,768	13	44	50-60.....	60,718	19	67
48-54.....	74,273	23	67	60-70.....	41,551	13	80
54-60.....	50,709	18	85	70-80.....	23,689	7	87
60-66.....	26,531	8	93	80-90.....	15,152	5	92
66-72.....	8,570	3	96	90-100.....	9,487	3	95
Over 72.....	11,076	4	100	100-125.....	10,646	3	98
.....	.....	.....	.....	Over 125.....	5,978	2	100
Totals.....	318,946	100	100	Totals.....	318,946	100	100

\*The report divides the total number of hours worked per week by six to secure the number worked per week-day.

The average number of hours worked per week was 45.6, and the average earnings per hour were 56.1 cents. The average weekly earnings were, therefore, \$25.61.

<sup>1</sup>“Industrial Survey in Selected Industries in the United States, 1919.” Preliminary report. United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Bulletin No. 265.

The hours worked per week averaged 45, the hourly earnings 30.1 cents, or average actual weekly earnings of \$13.55.

TABLE II

## HOURS WORKED PER WEEK AND EARNINGS PER HOUR OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES

HOURS WORKED BY WEEK				EARNINGS PER HOUR			
Number of Hours Worked per Week	Number of Employees	Per-centage	Cumu-lative Per-centage	Earnings per Hour in Cents	Number of Employees	Per-centage	Cumu-lative Per-centage
Under 24.....	4,284	5	5	Under 16.....	4,384	5	5
24-30.....	2,775	3	8	16-20.....	9,144	11	16
30-36.....	4,829	6	14	20-25.....	17,143	20	36
36-42.....	9,943	12	26	25-30.....	17,246	20	56
42-48.....	20,261	24	50	30-40.....	23,455	27	83
48-54.....	31,805	36	87	40-50.....	9,846	11	94
54-60.....	11,187	12	99	50-60.....	3,176	4	98
Over 60.....	728	1	100	60-70.....	917	1	99
				Over 70.....	501	1	100
Totals.....	85,812	100	100	Totals.....	85,812	100	100

These general tables indicate the following conclusions:

1. That even if the worker lost no full weeks of employment during the year, the *average* yearly earnings for each male worker would at the above rates, be only \$1,332. Yet this is \$205.00 less than the amount which W. C. Beyer of the Philadelphia Bureau of Municipal Research paid as the amount necessary to support a family of five in that city in October, 1918.

2. That a large section of the men employed suffered from extensive under employment. Ten per cent were employed for less than 24 hours per week, 16 per cent for less than 30 hours, 22 per cent for less than 36 hours, and 31 per cent for less than 42 hours. Some of the economic effects of this underemployment upon the worker can be seen from the fact that assuming the average hourly wage for these short-time workers was the same as that for the whole group, a week's work of 24 hours would net only \$13.66, or a yearly rate (with no allowance for weeks lost) of only \$710.00; a week's work of 30 hours would net only \$16.83, or a yearly rate of \$875.00; a week's work of 36 hours would amount to \$20.20, or a yearly rate of \$1,050; while a week's work of 42 hours would mean a weekly wage of \$23.56 and a yearly earning rate of \$1,225.

Although part of this loss of time was caused by turnover and by "voluntary" abstention from work, it is clear that it was due chiefly to the plants being so run that full employment could not be secured

The workmen of the country, therefore, have a legitimate grievance against the managers of individual plants in particular, or our industrial mechanism in general, that such a large percentage was not afforded an opportunity to do a full week's work, though employed. Added to this is the loss of production and the lack of utilization of the overhead spelling a greatly reduced output and higher prices to the consumer. Some industries made an especially bad record. Thus 21 per cent of the bituminous coal miners were employed for less than 24 hours per week, and 43 per cent for less than 30 hours per week; while 30 per cent of the men in the logging industry, 19 per cent of those in iron and steel mills, 17 per cent of those in lumber mills, and 10 per cent of those employed in chemical plants worked less than 24 hours per week.

Since the average number of hours worked per week was only 45.6 it is apparent that if those who were employed for less than this number were guaranteed this average, those who were compelled to work longer could have had their hours reduced to this point, with certainly no loss and probably with an increase over the existing output. There can be but little excuse for industry grossly underemploying some men and grossly overworking others. The steel industry appears as a conspicuous offender in this respect, for while 19 per cent of the employees studied were employed for less than 24 hours per week, 18 per cent worked 72 hours and over per week.

The workmen, therefore, may demand more continuous employment as well as a shorter day for those already working excessive hours. If this survey is typical, a universal 8-hour day, or 48-hour week, if accompanied by the provision of full-time employment, would mean an actual increase over the number of hours now worked, and undoubtedly a great increase in production. Moreover, it seems probable that we could afford a 44-hour week with little or no loss in production.

3. The 1903 Census Report on Employees and Wages showed that the average wage for women was approximately one-half that for men. This proportion seems to hold today; if this study is representative, there has been no decrease in the disparity of wages between the sexes.

It is very desirable that the Bureau of Labor Statistics be furnished with sufficient funds to make similar surveys periodically. Until this is done we cannot, of course, be sure that the post-armistice conditions were typical. This survey, however, provides significant material and at least furnishes ground for a strong suspicion that our industrial mechanism is running at much less than full efficiency, even when measured by the crudest of tests—that of steadiness of work.

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